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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000546

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SE GRATION, S/USSES, AF A A/S CARTER, AF/C  
NSC FOR MGAVIN AND HUDSON  
DEPT PLS PASS TO USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN  
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/22/2014

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SUBJECT: CDA'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR SALAHEDDIN

REF: A. KHARTOUM 538

[1](#)B. KHARTOUM 533

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Alberto M. Fernandez for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Presidential Advisor Ghazi Salaheddin welcomed the proposed return visit by Special Envoy Gration and offered to try to reduce tensions with NGOs in Sudan by meeting with them and assuring them of the GoS, readiness to work with them, as long as they do not cross the regime's redlines on political activity. He told Charge Fernandez that the GoS is not willing to release any JEM prisoners until the two sides are close to agreeing on a ceasefire. He suggested that the U.S. could best start proposed tripartite discussions with the NCP and SPLM by meeting with each separately to discuss their views on CPA implementation, before holding a joint meeting. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) As requested, CDA Fernandez called on Presidential Advisor Dr. Ghazi Salaheddin on April 21 at his office at the National Assembly (where he heads the NCP's parliamentary majority) to follow-up on Presidential Special Envoy Scott Gration's initial visit to Sudan. CDA began by informing Salaheddin that the visits of both the Special Envoy and Senator John Kerry had gone well from the U.S. point-of-view, but that urgent follow-up on GOS commitments made during the visits is required. Both the Special Envoy and the Senator had come away hopeful that there is an opportunity for real progress in U.S.-Sudanese relations. Although not a lot of time had elapsed since the April 10 understanding between SE Gration and the NCP, neither NGOs nor beneficiaries were yet seeing tangible benefits from that US-GOS discussion.

Reassure Humanitarian NGOs  
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[1](#)3. (C) CDA suggested that it would be helpful if the GoS could attempt to ease tensions and mistrust over the NGO expulsion issue, and suggested that a high-level National Congress Party official meet with the international NGOs remaining in Sudan to reassure them of the steps being taken by the government to facilitate their work. The NGOs are used to dealing with the GoS officials primarily in threatening circumstances, he said. A non-threatening meeting that laid out regime redlines, but also signaled a desire to "turn the page" and work together would reassure them. Salaheddin agreed that this would be useful and said that he himself is willing to undertake such a meeting, either before or right after his upcoming trip to Qatar, but in either case it would be before the Special Envoy returns. He also said that Minister of Humanitarian Affairs (and indicted ICC war criminal) Ahmed Harun had been dispatched to Darfur to ensure that the understanding reached with SE

Gratton was understood and being carried out at the state level and he had asked Harun to provide updates. He said he is prepared to call President Bashir if required to get action from NISS or SAF.

#### No JEM Prisoner Release Anytime Soon

14. (C) Second, the Charge pressed Salaheddin for a response to SE Gratton's suggestion that the GoS release Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) rebel prisoners as a confidence building measure to induce JEM to return to the Doha-process peace talks. Salaheddin averred that such a prisoner exchange is very sensitive within the regime because of JEM's oft-stated policy of regime change and Chad's (JEM's principal patron) unremitting hostility. He said that it certainly would be possible at some point, if the two sides were close to reaching an actual ceasefire agreement, but not as an initial step simply to get JEM to rejoin negotiations. "We have heard this and will be receptive to this, once we are working on a cessation of hostilities," he noted.

#### Tripartite Discussions

15. (C) The Charge alerted Salaheddin that a thank-you letter could be forthcoming from Senator Kerry, and that it would contain follow-up ideas on the mechanics of the potential NCP-SPLM-U.S. trilateral discussions on the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that SE Gratton proposed during his visit. Salaheddin confirmed that the NCP approves of this process but opined that such a mechanism should be separate from the Assessment and Evaluation Commission (AEC), and that the NCP and SPLM would simultaneously continue their own private

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(constant yet fruitless) bilateral discussions. He continued that the best approach to would be for the U.S. to start by sitting down with each party separately, in order to lay the groundwork for trilateral discussions and avoid a contentious and unproductive opening meeting at the tripartite level that would involve trading accusations.

#### Special Envoy Should Engage a Wider Audience

16. (C) CDA Fernandez told Salaheddin that the Special Envoy is planning to return to Sudan, arriving in Juba around May 3 and in Khartoum on May 5, after first visiting Doha and Chad, but that the final itinerary and stops are not confirmed. He asked whether Salaheddin had any suggestions on who SE Gratton should meet with in Sudan on that visit. Salaheddin welcomed the SE's return and suggested that this time he meet with a wider spectrum of Sudanese society, beyond the NCP and SPLM. CDA noted that a number of such meetings had been planned for the Special Envoy's first visit, but had been canceled to make time for negotiations with the GoS. Ghazi noted that "there should be enough time on his schedule for more such negotiations."

#### Comment

18. (C) Salaheddin was open and cooperative in his responses to the CDA's points and demonstrated his intention to follow through on the humanitarian agreement to ensure that it is implemented. Whether he will be able to effectively move the obstructionist and hostile Sudanese bureaucracy in the right direction is another question. Until now the government has been more focused on controlling and monitoring NGO activity in Sudan, not facilitating it; therefore getting government officials at the working level to expedite access by the NGOs will be a continual challenge even if there is political will at the top to do so. CDA will meet with UN D/SRSG for Humanitarian Affairs Ameerah Haq later today to check on implementation of the technical "umbrella agreements" that the GOS agreed to in their discussions with SE Gratton, as well as to get an update on the overall humanitarian situation in Darfur. So far we have seen fine words by regime officials, and the issuing of a decree covering some

aspects of the understanding but little or no improvement on the ground in Darfur, although the region remains relatively stable and quiet at this time with a noticeable and unusual lull in any sort of violence.

FERNANDEZ